

STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Agenda Consideration

TOPIC:	High School Graduation 2007	ITEM NO:	9F
PREPARED BY:	André A. Nougaret, Interim Superintendent	MEETING:	September 26, 2006
	Valerie Cottongim, Public Information Officer	ACTION DATE:	September 26, 2006
		INFORMATION ONLY:	N/A

ACTION REQUESTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT:

That the School Board receive information relevant to the determination by the Board of the June 2007 high school graduation location.

KEY POINTS:

- ❖ The School Board requested that staff review options for graduation ceremonies. The School Board has previously received information regarding off-site graduations. (See attached agenda items from March 14, 2006, June 20, 2006, and September 12, 2006.)
- ❖ A survey was conducted during July and August. The evaluation of surveys completed on-line is attached. The survey was sent to the parents of 4,051 rising juniors and seniors in attendance at all 5 of the county's high schools. There were 577 surveys returned in hard copy and 443 surveys answered on-line for a response rate of 25.17 percent.
- ❖ Meetings to discuss this issue were held with the student leadership at each high school. Attached please find a protocol which outlines those questions asked of each high school's student leadership group. In addition a composite summary of the students' remarks by school is provided along with summary observations.
- ❖ Should the School Board approve off-site graduations for the 2006-2007 school year, this process would be considered a pilot project and will be evaluated to determine continuation in following years.

SCHOOL BOARD GOAL(S):

(Goal 4) Address the impact of continuing population growth by developing plans to address expanding staff, facilities, transportation, attendance zones, and instruction.

(Goal 3) Encourage parents and the community to increase their interest and involvement in schools

FUNDING SOURCE: School Operating and Student Fees

AUTHORIZATION REFERENCE: Policy 7-26 Graduation

**Attachment to Agenda Item 9D
September 26, 2006 School Board Meeting**

High School Student Leadership Graduation Discussions

Meetings were held with high school student leadership groups on the following dates:

Brooke Point: Thursday, September 21, 2006, 2:30 p.m., 14 students
Stafford: Tuesday, September 19, 2006, 1:20 p.m., 10 students
Mountain View: Friday, September 15, 2006, 1:30 p.m., 8 students
Colonial Forge: Tuesday, September 12, 2006, 1:15 p.m., 11 students
North Stafford: Monday, September 11, 1:30 p.m., 10 students

All leadership groups were encouraged to share this information with their classmates and to share their opinions with the Board either through email or during citizen comments at Board meetings.

Questions asked of the students throughout the discussions were:

1. How many of you are seniors? juniors? other?
2. Would you prefer to keep graduation at the individual schools or move it to an outside venue, specifically the Fredericksburg Convention and Expo Center in Central Park?
3. How many of you saw the survey sent to your parents this summer?
4. Did you discuss the issue with your parents?
5. How many of you were involved in completing the survey?
6. What are your school's issues with graduation?
7. What problems do you see with having graduation off-site?

Questions asked by the students throughout the discussions were:

1. How many tickets would be available for each student at the Expo Center?
2. Why can't graduation be held in the school's football stadium?
3. Could we have graduation Saturday morning in the football stadium?
4. Could graduation be held at Nissan Pavilion or the Patriot Center to ensure unlimited tickets?
5. How would rehearsals be handled if graduation was at the Expo Center?
6. What are the time slots for graduation at the Expo Center?
7. Will parking be an issue at the Expo Center?

The Mountain View students stated they would prefer graduation off-site. One officer, not at the meeting, preferred graduation at the school. Statements made by students were:

- It is not fair to larger families and it limits the number of family members who may wish to attend.
- One-level seating is an issue.
- Would prefer to have it at a larger venue, Nissan Pavilion or the Patriot Center or outside in their stadium.
- Decorating (balloons, etc.) is an issue off-site

The Colonial Forge students stated they would prefer graduation at the school. Their concerns were:

- Parking at the Expo center
- Rehearsals
- After graduation photo opportunities
- Not that many more tickets per student

- The gymnasium isn't good for seniors/grandparents
- Would like Saturday graduation

The Stafford High students preferred graduation off-site. Their comments included:

- It is difficult to choose which four family members get to see you graduate.
- The bleachers are very crowded and difficult for grandparents and other senior citizens to navigate.
- Suggested putting wide screens half way back in the Expo Center and projecting the graduation to alleviate the viewing issues from further back in the facility.

After the discussion and questions and answer period, the majority of the Brooke Point students preferred graduation off-site. Their comments included:

- It is difficult to choose which four family members to invite to graduation.
- The bleachers are extremely crowded.
- Would like a larger facility with unlimited tickets (i.e. Nissan Pavilion or Patriot Center)
- Concerned with rehearsal if off-site
- One level seating is a concern
- Decorating (balloons, etc.) is a concern if off-site

The majority of the North Stafford students who expressed an opinion preferred holding graduation at the school. Their comments included:

- Concerns with the school's 25th anniversary celebration
- One-level seating is a concern
- Decorating (balloons, etc) is a concern if off-site

STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Agenda Consideration

TOPIC:	High School Graduations 2007	ITEM NO:	4H
PREPARED BY:	André A. Nougaret, Interim Superintendent	MEETING:	September 12, 2006
	Valerie Cottongim, Public Information Officer	ACTION DATE:	September 26, 2006
		INFORMATION ONLY:	N/A

ACTION REQUESTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT:

That the School Board receive information regarding off-site 2007 high school graduation survey results and provide direction regarding any additional information necessary to facilitate a decision on September 26, 2006.

KEY POINTS:

- ❖ The School Board has previously received information regarding off-site graduations. (See attached agenda items from March 14, 2006 and June 20, 2006.)
- ❖ A survey (see attached) was conducted during July and August. The evaluation of surveys completed on-line is attached. The survey was sent to the parents of 4051 rising juniors and seniors in attendance at all 5 of the county's high schools. There were 577 surveys returned in hard copy and 443 surveys answered on line for a response rate of 25.17 percent.

Of the 443 responses to the online survey:

77.7 percent of the respondents answered yes to the question "Would you prefer that graduation ceremonies be held at a site other than the high schools?"

83.7 percent of the respondents answered yes to the question "Would you support off-site graduation if senior class dues increased by \$10 to cover any additional costs for a larger graduation venue?"

64.1 percent of the respondents answered "I would not have a problem with one-level seating" in response to a question regarding the seating at the Expo Center.

The on-line response rate was equally distributed among the five high schools with approximately 20 percent of the respondents from each school.

Of the 577 paper responses to the survey:

70 percent of the respondents answered yes to the question "Would you prefer that graduation ceremonies be held at a site other than the high schools?"

80 percent of the respondents answered yes to the question "Would you support off-site graduation if senior class dues increased by \$10 to cover any additional costs for a larger graduation venue?"

58.9 percent of the respondents answered "I would not have a problem with one-level seating" in response to a question regarding the seating at the Expo Center.

Of those responding on paper, 19 percent were from Brooke Point, 21 percent were from Colonial Forge, 22 percent were from Mountain View, 16 percent were from North Stafford and 22 percent were from Stafford High.

- ❖ Meetings to discuss this issue with the student leadership at each high school will be held prior to the next School Board meeting.
- ❖ Should the School Board approve off-site graduations for the 2006-2007 school year, this process would be considered a pilot project and will be evaluated to determine continuation in following years.

SCHOOL BOARD GOAL(S): (Goal 4) Address the impact of continuing population growth by developing plans to address expanding staff, facilities, transportation, attendance zones, and instruction. (Goal 3) Encourage parents and the community to increase their interest and involvement in schools

FUNDING SOURCE: School Operating and Student Fees

AUTHORIZATION REFERENCE: Policy 7-26 Graduation
February 2006